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3. Alaska fire departments are receiving FEMA funds

6. News from CSPC on playgrounds

7. Web resources for injury prevention

3. Alaska fire departments are receiving FEMA funds

15 minutes. The dual-task condition required the SPs to engage in a conversation with a confederate (or listen to a radio broadcast of their choosing or a book on tape) while concurrently performing the tracking task. The confederate's task was to facilitate the conversation and also to ensure that the subject listened and spoke in approximately equal proportions during the dual-task portions of the experiment.

A preliminary analysis of detection rates (DR) and reaction times (RT) to traffic signals indicated that there were no differences between hands-free and hand-held cell phone groups. Neither were there differences between radio control and book-on-tape control groups. Therefore, the data were aggregated to form a 2 (Group: Cell Phone vs. Control) x 2 (Task: Single vs. Dual) factorial design.

	Single-Task	Dual-Task
Cell Phone	0.028 (.05)	0.070 (.09)
Control	0.027 (.04)	0.034 (.04)

	Single-Task	Dual-Task
Cell Phone	534 (67)	585 (90)
Control	543 (65)	533 (65)

Overall, miss rates were low; however, the probability of a miss significantly increased when subjects were engaged in conversations on the cell phone, $F(1,31)=8.8$, $p < 0.01$. By contrast, the difference between single and dual-task conditions was not reliable for the control group, $F(1,31)=0.9$, $p > 0.36$. Analysis of the RT data revealed that subjects in the cell phone group responded slower to simulated traffic signals while engaged in conversation on the cell phone, $F(1,31)=29.8$, $p < 0.01$. There again was no indication of a dual-task decrement for the control group.

The authors state that these data demonstrate that the phone conversation itself resulted in significant slowing in the response to simulated traffic signals, as well as an increase in the likelihood of missing these signals. Moreover, the fact that hand-held and hands-free cell phones resulted in equivalent dual-task deficits indicates that the interference was not due to peripheral factors such as holding the phone while conversing. These findings also rule out interpretations that attribute the deficits associated with a cell phone conversation to simply attending to verbal material, because dual-task deficits were not observed in the book-on-tape control. Active engagement in the cell phone conversation appears to be necessary to produce the observed dual-task interference.

5. Labor Day safety news release from the National Safety Council www.nsc.org

For Immediate Release, August 22, 2001
Contact: Joe Larkin, 630-775-2303

Highways Aren't the Only Holiday Trouble Spots National Safety Council Warns of Dangers in the Home and Community Over the Long Labor Day Weekend

Itasca, IL - Almost as many Americans will die from falls, drowning, and other incidents in their homes and communities as will be killed in highway crashes this busy Labor Day weekend, the National Safety Council (NSC) warned today.

The Council estimates that 474 people may die and 25,100 people may suffer nonfatal disabling injuries in motor vehicle crashes over the 3-1/4 day Labor Day weekend. The lives of an additional 345 people involved in crashes, however, will be saved because they will be wearing their seat belts.

“Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers associated with driving during the holidays,” said NSC President Alan C. McMillan. “More importantly, they know what they can do to protect themselves – by buckling their seat belts, and making sure children are securely restrained in the back seat in age-appropriate child safety seats or booster seats. If everyone were to buckle up this Labor Day weekend, we would save an additional 128 lives.”

On the other hand, McMillan said, many Americans don’t yet realize the full extent of the dangers lurking in their homes and communities.

“During the average period comparable to a long holiday weekend,” McMillan said, “471 people will die from accidents in the home and community. What’s more, while the highway death rate is slowly declining, deaths and serious injuries in the home and community are on the rise.”

In addition to wearing safety belts, the Council urges motorists to follow these safe driving practices in order to survive on the highways this Labor Day weekend:

Don’t drink and drive. In 1999 (latest available figures), 47 percent of all traffic fatalities over the Labor Day weekend involved an intoxicated or alcohol-impaired driver or non-motorist. Allow enough travel time for frequent breaks on longer trips. Drowsy drivers are an increasing problem in our fast-paced society. Drowsiness can reduce reaction time almost as much as drinking.

On the home front, the NSC estimates that about 6.9 million Americans suffered disabling injuries in the home in 1999, and nearly 28,800 died. Falls in the home or on home premises are the leading cause of accidental death, accounting for 9,600 deaths, or about one-third of all home fatalities. Other leading causes of death include poisoning, fires, drowning, and suffocation by ingesting food or objects that obstruct breathing.

“Older Americans are increasingly at risk of falling at home and being seriously injured or even killed,” McMillan said. “All age groups are vulnerable, but older adults are most at risk. In fact, 80 percent of fall-related fatal injuries are to people over the age of 65.”

Falls in the community caused an additional 6,800 deaths in 1999.

More than 24 percent of people suffering a hip fracture, the most serious result of a fall, die within a year of the fall and another 50 percent never return to their prior level of mobility or independence.

To combat this growing national problem, the National Safety Council offers the following advice:

Keep floors and stairs clear of clutter. Remove toys, paper, books, clothes and shoes -- anything that an older person with failing eyesight might trip on. Install grab-bars in bathrooms next to the toilet and in the tub or shower. Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep rugs in place. Use non-skid mats in the bathtub, on shower floors and on linoleum and tile floors. Keep items that are used often in cabinets that can be reached without using a step stool. Older people should generally avoid the use of stepstools or ladders to reach objects above their heads. Make sure living areas are well lighted. In general, older people need brighter lights to see well. Install nightlights on both sides of beds. Install handrails and lights in all staircases. Make sure eyeglass prescriptions are current. As we age, we need more frequent eye exams. Glaucoma and cataracts occur more frequently in the elderly. Make sure medication doses are correct. Have a health-care professional review prescriptions and non-prescription medications frequently. People of all ages can benefit from regular exercise.

Low-impact exercises like Tai Chi that improve balance and coordination are especially helpful for older people.

This year's Labor Day holiday weekend officially begins at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, August 31 and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Monday, September 3.

The National Safety Council is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to reducing unintentional injuries in the workplace, on the road, in homes and communities. For more information about safety on the highway and in homes and communities, explore our web site.

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6. NEWS from CPSC. Schools are not the only places are children are at risk for injury, please read the following news release on playgrounds.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Office of Information and Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20207

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 2, 2001

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Release # 01-213

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Report Finds More Deaths on Home Playgrounds Than Public Playgrounds CPSC, KaBOOM! Launch Campaign to Make Backyard Playgrounds Safer

WASHINGTON, D.C - A new report (pdf) shows that over a ten-year period, more deaths to children occurred on backyard playgrounds than on public playgrounds. From 1990 to August 2000, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has reports of nearly 150 deaths to children under the age of 15 involving playground equipment; at least 90 of these occurred in a home setting. Almost three-fourths of the deaths in home locations resulted from hangings from ropes, cords, homemade rope swings, and other similar items. New safety standards, aimed at reducing the risk of strangulation, require that ropes be secured at both ends and that makers of home equipment warn against attaching additional ropes.

Playground equipment is also a leading cause of injuries to children. In 1999 alone, it is estimated that there were more than 200,000 playground-equipment injuries, with almost 47,000 injuries on home playgrounds to children under age 15. The proportion of pre-school children (younger than age 5) injured on playground equipment was higher on home playgrounds than on playgrounds in general. Almost 40 percent of those injured at home were younger than 5 years, as compared with about 27 percent on other playgrounds.

"Children should be out on the playground where they belong, not in the hospital emergency room," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "We believe that by sharing our simple safety tips with parents, home playgrounds can be a place where kids have fun and play safely."

"Years of advocacy for safe public playgrounds has helped raise standards for those play spaces with the intention to lower injuries to children," said Darell Hammond, co-founder and CEO of KaBOOM!, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C.. "Now, it's time to use our experience, and print and Internet resources, to make families aware of the dangers too often posed by home playsets."

CPSC and KaBOOM! are teaming up to reduce playground hazards by providing parents with safety information. Parents are encouraged to install and maintain protective surfacing, eliminate unsafe ropes and check for potentially hazardous hooks and edges on swings and slides on home playgrounds.

CPSC's study found that only 9 percent of home playgrounds had protective, shock-absorbing surfacing. Dirt and grass, which are the most prevalent surfaces under home playground equipment, do not adequately protect children from serious head injuries.

To help prevent injuries from falls and other hazards on home playgrounds, the following safety tips are recommended:

Install and maintain at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7 feet high. If sand or pea gravel is used, install at least a 9-inch layer for play equipment up to 5 feet high. Or, use surfacing mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.

Install protective surfacing at least six feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, the surface should extend, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.

Never attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines, or pet leashes to the equipment. This can present a serious strangulation hazard to children.

Smooth sharp points or edges, and cover open "S" hooks or protruding bolts.

Check for openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs. Spaces should be either less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches so that they don't present an entrapment hazard.

Always supervise young children to make sure they are safe.

CPSC, in partnership with KaBOOM!, is issuing a "Home Playground Safety Checklist" (pdf), to educate parents about creating safe home playgrounds for their kids. To order a free copy of the checklist, call the Federal Consumer Information Center (FCIC) toll-free at (888) 878-3256 and ask for item 627H, or go to the FCIC website at www.pueblo.gsa.gov. Consumers also can order the checklist by sending their name and address to FCIC, Dept. 627H, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

For more information on playground safety, contact CPSC at (800) 638- 2772 or www.cpsc.gov. You can view the "Handbook for Playground Safety" (pdf) and the "Public Playground Safety Checklist" or get a free copy by writing to CPSC, Washington, DC 20207. For more information on KaBOOM! and its resources available to develop safe community and backyard playgrounds, call 866-KaBOOM-0 or visit www.kaboom.org.

Consumers can also view a video clip about this recall (transcript). This is in "streaming video" format.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270, or visit CPSC's web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov/talk.html>. For information on CPSC's fax-on-demand service, call the above numbers or visit the web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/103.html>. To order a press release through fax-on-demand, call (301) 504-0051 from the handset of your fax machine and enter the release number. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

7. Web resources for injury prevention

While home playgrounds need to be checked for safety (newsletter item # 6), awareness about safety over Labor Day needs to be raised (see newsletter item #7), and drivers need to be alert (see newsletter item #5 on cell phone usage), there are many, many injury prevention subjects of importance. This newsletter tries to post abstracts, articles, news releases and information that is of interest or timely for the readers. While many readers are safety and injury prevention experts and know many of the web sites on the topics, some readers are not. The following web based resources are just a few offered as a way to expand on injury prevention information. Few sites are mentioned since two are really a springboard to many, many links on the subject. Readers are also invited to share their favorite injury prevention sites with their listservs.

Each week www.safetylit.org has abstracts on a variety of safety topics with a citation for the original article and www.nsc.org or the National Safety Council is easy to access. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a lot of links and one of my favorites for home safety is the <http://www.cdc.gov/safeusa/home/safehome.htm> link. Accessing the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at www.cpsc.gov can help keep up on recall information. However, all those sites just mentioned can be found as links through the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control site at www.cdc.gov/ncipc/injweb/websites.htm or, www.injuryprevention.org/ serviced by San Diego State University and the State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association. Beware that some links may not be current as web sites come and go or are not maintained.

The site address for the Section of Community Health and Emergency Medical Services, Injury Surveillance and Prevention Program can be found at http://chems.alaska.gov/ems_injury_prevention.htm. You will find links there as well.

This message has been compiled by the Section of Community Health & EMS (CHEMS), Alaska Division of Public Health and sent to subscribers of the AK-Prev and AHELP list-serves. It has also been sent as a "bcc" to others in Alaska including Public Health Centers, SAFE KIDS coalitions, Native Health organizations, and regional EMS Councils and Coordinators who may be interested and active in injury prevention and health promotion. The purpose is to share resources, breaking news, training opportunities, product recalls, and opinion to help prevent injuries to Alaskans. Feedback and contributions are encouraged. Contributions can be directed to Mary Krom: mary_krom@health.state.ak.us

Link for the AK-Prev & AK-EMSC list-serve:

http://chems.alaska.gov/ems_list_servers.htm

Link for the AHELP list-serve: <http://www.auroraweb.com/ahec/>
